



STREPERA FULIGINOSA: Gould.

STREPERA FULIGINOSA, *Gould.*

Sooty Crow-Shrike.

Cracticus fuliginosus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part IV. p. 106.

Coronica fuliginosa, Gould in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part I.

Black Magpie, of the Colonists.

THE great stronghold of this species is the island of Van Diemen's Land, in which it is a permanent resident; but its range extends to the islands in Bass's Straits, and a few individuals have been found in South Australia. Its browner colouring, more arched and gibbose bill, its smaller size, and the absence of the white colouring of the under tail-coverts and of the base of the primaries, are characters by which it may at once be distinguished from all the other members of the group. The localities it frequents are also of a different description, those preferred being low swampy grounds in the neighbourhood of the sea and woods bordering rivers. Like the other species of the genus, it subsists on insects and grubs of various kinds, to which pulpy seeds and berries are frequently added.

It is very active on the ground, running over the surface with a motion between a run and a hop with great rapidity.

It breeds in the low trees, constructing a large, deep and cup-shaped nest very similar to that of the European Crow, and lays three eggs, of a pale vinous brown marked all over with large irregular blotches of brown, one inch and five-eighths long by one inch and a quarter broad.

Its note is much less shrill than that of the *Strepera arguta*.

I have seen this bird in a state of captivity, and it appeared to bear confinement remarkably well.

The sexes present no visible difference except in size, the female being smaller than the male; they may be thus described:—

All the plumage sooty black, with the exception of the ends of the primaries and all but the two middle tail-feathers, which are white; irides bright yellow; bill and feet black.

The figures are of the natural size.